



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND



Growth Models: Peer Review & Application Approval

February 21, 2006

In November 2005, Secretary Spellings announced a pilot program in which States may propose a growth-based accountability model for use in meeting the goals of No Child Left Behind. As a pilot program, the Department can test the idea that growth models show promise as fair, reliable and innovative methods to measure student improvement and to hold schools accountable for academic achievement.

- Growth models give schools credit for student improvement over time by tracking individual student achievement from one year to the next.
- A pilot program gives the Department the ability to rigorously evaluate growth models and their alignment with NCLB, and to share results with other States.

The Department is in the process of accepting State proposals and will approve no more than 10 high-quality growth models in this pilot program for 2005-06. This process, including the use of peer reviewers, will help the department select these models.

- The purpose of this peer review is to help ensure that the States accepted into the growth model pilot have technically sound growth models, a high probability of success in incorporating measures of student growth into school accountability systems, and a model consistent with *No Child Left Behind*.
- By putting a gold standard peer review method in place, we will ensure that the selection process is transparent and fair for all participating states.

Peer Review and Approval Process

- The application deadline was Friday, February 17, 2006. Twenty states have submitted growth model proposals.
- Fourteen of those states have applied for the current school year which are: Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Utah.
- Six states have applied for the 2006-2007 school year which are: Maryland, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota.
- Department staff will conduct an initial review to determine that each State is at least minimally able to meet the seven core principles laid out by the Secretary (such as having grades 3-8 assessment system in place since 2004-05, and having an assessment and data system that tracks individual student progress). Those proposals that pass this initial review will advance to Peer Review.
- Peers will examine each State's proposal using Peer Review Guidance.
- The Department will facilitate a conference call between the State and the peer review team. The peers will be able to ask clarifying questions during this call.
- Peers will use their evaluations of States' proposals to guide a discussion among the reviewers and build a consensus document that explains why a State's proposal is recommended for approval. These recommendations are due to the Secretary by May 2006.
- Using this information, the Secretary will decide which states to approve for the growth model pilot.

An essential tool in selecting the growth model States is a cadre of nationally recognized experts to review and make recommendations on States' growth model proposals. The experts invited to participate

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represent a wide range of perspectives from academia to the private sector to state and local organizations.

They include: Dr. Eric Hanushek, Stanford University, Dr. Chris Schatschneider, Florida State University, Dr. David Francis, University of Houston, Dr. Margaret Goertz, University of Pennsylvania, Kati Haycock, The Education Trust, William Taylor, Citizens Commission on Civil Rights, Sharon Lewis, Council of Great City Schools (retired), Dr. Robert Mendro, Dallas Independent School District, Dr. Jeff Nellhaus, Massachusetts Department of Education, Dr. Mitchell Chester, Ohio Department of Education, and Dr. Louis Fabrizio, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Peer Review Guidance

To facilitate the peer review process, the Department is providing guidance to aid the peer review process. This document, which will be used to evaluate State proposals, also provides information to States about how to organize their proposals. This document may be found on the Department's website at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/growthmodelguidance.doc>

The Department will rigorously monitor and evaluate States that receive approval under the pilot this year.